

City of Hayden Council Member Seat #2

	Ed DePriest	Luke Sommer
<p>1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position?</p>	<p>Ed DePriest – Hayden Council Seat #2</p> <p>I am very concerned about the future of Hayden. This election is about leading Hayden. The individual elected should represent ALL of the Hayden citizens, not put party ideology ahead of representing ALL of the people?</p> <p>My opponent is another KCRCC endorsed ideologue and I fear that should KCRCC ideologues gain the majority in Hayden, the city will experience a situation much like occurred recently at North Idaho College.</p> <p>My four zone code text amendments and a Standard of Approval (all were adopted) better managed growth and density. The proof is in the Hayden Community Development Report (link below). Since the changes, there have been ZERO high density/Multi-Family developments in Hayden in four years.</p> <p>https://cms2.revize.com/revize/haydenid/Docs/Government/Departments/Building/Reports/BuildingTrendsAugust2025.pdf?t=202509111059040&t=202509111059040</p> <p>I accomplished everything that I campaigned I would do, and will continue to do so.</p>	<p>My name is Luke Sommer, and I'm running for Hayden City Council, Seat #2. Hayden deserves leadership that brings people together, not leadership that tears them down. For the past three years, I've witnessed council meetings marked by conflict, poor judgment, and a lack of respect for both citizens and fellow council members. I want to restore civility, fairness, and honesty so that Hayden can stay the safe, family-friendly community we all love.</p>
<p>2. How could our city be improved? Please provide your top 2-3 ideas.</p>	<p>The city of Hayden struggles with many of the same issues that our neighboring cities are facing. The obvious is growth and all that has come with it. What are the wants of the community? Do the people want a Community Center? A Senior Center?</p> <p>The bottom line is always: How much are the citizens willing to pay for what services and what quality of life.</p> <p>The 2023 community survey indicated the top five concerns: 1. Traffic. 2. Well planned growth. 3. Maintenance of streets. 4. Quality of new development in Hayden. 5. Well planned commercial growth.</p> <p>I would suggest improvements be focused on the concerns listed by the people.</p> <p>Development of some type of Community/Senior Center, as well as improving the area around city hall and McIntire Park as a central gathering place for Hayden citizens is also an improvement that I would like to see.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Restore respect and order to city government by enforcing open-meeting laws and proper parliamentary procedure. 2. Protect taxpayers by practicing fiscal discipline and ending election-year budget games. 3. Keep Hayden's small-town character by protecting property rights and resisting higher-density growth.

	Ed DePriest	Luke Sommer
<p>3. In your opinion, is growth in North Idaho being handled appropriately?</p>	<p>In North Idaho? No.</p> <p>In Hayden? Yes, I think that the changes that the city has made in the last four-years has done a good job of getting a handle on growth and density.</p> <p>What happens in neighboring cities is out of the control of Hayden. Although Hayden is affected by the growth around us, the city can not control what kind of growth and density our neighboring cities approve. In the last four-years, I put forth four zone code text changes and a Standard of Approval, (all were adopted) which has resulted in better management of growth and density. The people told us that they want the city to remain a primarily single-family home community with limited high-density development. The changes have accomplished what the people said that they want. Since the changes, there have been ZERO high-density developments and the development that has been approved has been less than four dwellings per acre, which is low density.</p>	<p>No. Too often, growth has been driven by outside agendas or special interests, not the will of Hayden's citizens. Growth is not inevitable — ask the many Rust Belt and East Coast towns that have withered away. Hayden must plan for both booms and busts, keeping growth in line with our infrastructure, property rights, and the people's expressed desire to "Keep Small Town Hayden." This includes resisting higher-density infill like duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and small apartment complexes that chip away at our single-family neighborhoods.</p>
<p>4. As cities face increasing costs to pay for city services including law enforcement, fire districts, schools and increased traffic due to increased home developments, what are your suggestions so that growth pays for itself?</p>	<p>This is a much-misunderstood concept about growth in Idaho. People continually use the phrase: "Make growth pay for growth." What the people do not understand is that the STATE tells the cities what impact fees they can charge to new development. Cities can not arbitrarily create impact fees and set amounts. There is a formula that cities must follow.</p> <p>Fees, by law, can only be charged for the impact that a particular development will have on the city, they can not be used to fix deficiencies in arears. If the people want cities to be able to charge more to development; they need to encourage their STATE legislators to allow cities to charge impact fees for the services listed in the question.</p> <p>Currently, Hayden, by STATE statute, can only collect Impact Fees for circulation/roads, parks, and law enforcement capital improvements.</p>	<p>Growth should be funded through impact fees and direct responsibility placed on those driving it. New development must cover the infrastructure and services it requires — roads, sewer, fire protection, schools, and law enforcement. Urban Renewal Districts (URDs) often shift these costs onto taxpayers through unelected boards. Hayden's URD alone redirects about \$1 million annually. I oppose extending HURA and believe Idaho's Urban Renewal Act should be reformed so it is used only in rare circumstances, with accountability to the people.</p>

	Ed DePriest	Luke Sommer
5. What improvements should be made to the city council's role in the planning and authorization of new developments?	<p>As I have indicated in previous questions, I put forth four zone code text changes and a Standard of Approval, all related to new development. I believe that the city has done all that it can LEGALLY do to manage growth without infringing on Property Rights. The city can not STOP growth. The city cannot impose a moratorium.</p> <p>By statute, a moratorium can only be imposed after proving an imminent peril to the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens. Even if a moratorium could be imposed, by statute, they are only good for six-months. During that time, the city must come up with a plan to cure the cause of the moratorium.</p> <p>A factor that many don't understand is that much of the current development is based on prior annexation and/or development agreements that do not give the current city council the ability to deviate from those agreements. To do so would result in the city (the taxpayers) being sued.</p>	<p>Council members must be involved early in the process, not just at the final vote. Early engagement ensures that proposed projects align with Hayden's small-town vision, protect property rights, and include realistic infrastructure plans. I will advocate that the council, not outside influences, sets the direction — and that every major decision receives full public scrutiny before approval.</p>
6. In your opinion, should any services currently provided by the city be cut, eliminated, or privatized?	<p>I do not believe that any current services should be cut, eliminated, or privatized.</p> <p>This past budget session, I found \$68K in line-item reductions from a variety of departments. In the last few years, because of conservative investments and higher interest rates, the city has realized significant interest income. This income has gone into the "savings" account and should be primarily marked for capital projects. Like any "savings" account, it can be resourced should unexpected shortfalls or emergencies occur.</p> <p>In recent elections, candidates have suggested cutting Parks and Rec. and using that money to pay for law enforcement. First off, that amount would not come anywhere near funding law enforcement. But more important to the community: Parks and Recreation is a glue that brings the Hayden community together. It brings families together to share experiences and get to know neighbors. To cut, or eliminate Parks and Rec would be devastating to the fiber of the Hayden community.</p>	<p>I will fight against government growing beyond its proper role. As one of four votes, I will advocate for lean, efficient spending and oppose expanding bureaucracy or creating new departments unless absolutely necessary. Essential services like public safety and utilities must be protected, but unnecessary programs or spending should be reduced or eliminated.</p>
7. Do you believe access to city managed water and sewer should be increased to rural communities, why or why not?	<p>I believe that the only time city services should be made available to an area is if/when that area annexes into the city and pays for the services. I believe that the current well/septic system of the rural areas is well designed; as indicated by the recent aquifer study showing that the Rathdram/Spokane aquifer is in good condition; both in quantity and quality.</p>	<p>I will oppose any expansion beyond our boundaries until Hayden's existing system, capacity, and long-term maintenance are secure and affordable for current residents. My understanding is that there is a need for a complete study on the aquifer's ability to meet the demands that our fast-growingLUkeL communities are putting on it.</p>

	Ed DePriest	Luke Sommer
8. How do you plan on keeping a healthy reserve fund without increasing taxes?	<p>Forever, Hayden has had the lowest tax rate in the area. Growth is not, and has not, paid for itself because of the low rate and the state controls of how much cities can collect in impact fees and it has caught up with Hayden.</p> <p>Hayden citizens are faced with making some hard decisions in the coming year.</p> <p>The County recently told the city that what we are currently paying for Sheriff service will only cover about half of the level of service that we were told it would by the Sheriff when the people passed an increase to the base tax.</p> <p>The city does not have the funds for \$55 million in road, intersection, infrastructure improvements.</p> <p>The city will have to put these questions on the ballot.</p> <p>Being honest? The city must go to the ballot for the people to tell the city how much they want to pay for what level and quality of services.</p> <p>Some say: Cut services. OK, what services do you want to cut that will come close to covering the law enforcement and infrastructure costs?</p>	<p>Through disciplined, conservative budgeting — no wasteful spending or unbudgeted items, and careful monitoring of revenues and interest earnings. When the city manages money prudently in strong years, it can weather leaner ones without raising taxes. I will continue to push for realistic forecasting and responsible reserves that protect taxpayers.</p>
9. What is your opinion on affordable housing? Is it something that the city should be pursuing?	<p>The alternatives that keep being proposed are either some form of subsidization, or the cities reduce fees charged to development. I am all for private subsidies. I think that is great. There are some private groups showing some success locally and I support more of that type of involvement. I am not for government subsidies, as that is going to be taxpayer funded on either the front or back end. I am not for cities reducing, or eliminating, fees. The fees support the planning, engineering, sewer, and services that ensure healthy and safe building that meets codes and uniformity.</p> <p>The conflict comes down to the development community wanting more density in order to, understandably, make a profit; and the community telling the city that they do not want high density development. How do we find a happy balance?</p> <p>I believe in the free-market. It is not perfect and does not always result in utopian outcomes, but it is the reason that so many want to live in America.</p>	<p>It is not the responsibility of city government to pursue affordable housing—that is a market function. Government intervention, especially by the federal government, created many of the problems we face today. It would be unwise to put the same people in charge of solving them. “Affordable” and “attainable” housing are often buzzwords used by developers to push higher-density projects. The best way to make housing attainable is through a free market, lower taxes, and responsible local planning.</p>

	Ed DePriest	Luke Sommer
<p>10. All too often local residents feel that their public comment is not taken into consideration when decisions are made that directly affect their daily lives and their property values. What would you do differently to change the public's perception?</p>	<p>Education and communication is how I would try to change the perception.</p> <p>The city staff, are following state statutes and to do otherwise would get the city/taxpayers sued.</p> <p>State statutes protect the Property Rights and privacy of landowners/applicants, etc...</p> <p>The city can not make projects public until the project comes before the Planning Commission or City Council.</p> <p>When an applicant meets all of the codes, Standards, etc... the project is then made public before the Planning Commission or Council.</p> <p>I understand the frustration of people. The truth is that by the time a project comes before the city for a hearing, there is little that can LEGALLY be done to deny a project. If a project is denied, statute requires the city to tell the applicant what they have to do to be approved.</p> <p>The best way for public input to be effective is for citizens to attend meetings and understand the statutes, codes, zoning, etc...</p> <p>Citizens are always welcome to suggest changes to codes, zoning, etc...</p>	<p>The First Amendment guarantees the right "to petition the government for a redress of grievances." Public comment is a fundamental part of that right. Citizens must feel heard, not ignored.</p>
<p>11. What is your opinion on "Smart Cities" and how they apply to North Idaho?</p>	<p>I think it is "Smart" to plan according to what the citizens of the city tell the city they want to see in the future. As has been made very clear, the majority of Hayden citizens do not want high-density, so managing high-density has been a focus. Certain areas of the city will facilitate different types of development.</p> <p>But, to force the current "Smart Cities" template that many cities are adopting on the citizens is not right and I do not support it. The people have told the city that they want low-density, primarily single-family housing to be the majority of housing types. The city does need a certain amount of duplex, triplex, and in proper locations that do not infringe on existing residential neighborhood and some level of multi-family housing. I think that the current revision of the Future Land Use Map has land uses in proper locations. Light Industrial out by the airport. Commercial along primary arterials. Higher density away from existing single-family neighborhoods.</p>	<p>I oppose Smart City initiatives that threaten privacy and local control.</p>

	Ed DePriest	Luke Sommer
12. Should the concept of “equitable outcome” be implemented as a part of the city council’s decision-making process? Why or why not?	I believe in Equality of Opportunity to achieve to the best of a person’s ability. I believe that the best qualified person should be the person doing the job, or given a contract, etc... I do not support manipulating the outcome of an issue based on anything other than meeting the criteria of, and maybe even competing for, whatever the issue is. The best, most qualified person gets the job.	No. Government should focus on equal opportunity, not equal outcomes.
13. Is there anything in your personal, business, or career life that would be a conflict of interest in your ability to serve the people of this city?	No.	No.
14. What is your background and why do you feel it qualifies you for this position?	All of my life, I have been very conservative. Related to the decisions that council members make, that most applies to fiscal decisions. In almost four-years serving on council, I have learned a lot. What I thought when I was first elected has proven to be far different when faced with legal and statutory elements, etc... I now have a far different, and far better understanding, of the realities of operating the city of Hayden. I have represented the city at the Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Panhandle Area Council, and for the last two years involved with the Hayden Area Regional Sewer Board. I have accumulated a broad education as to many elements that affect the city and the citizens. I believe that I have demonstrated that I keep my word and promises. I will continue to seek the input from the citizens and translate their desires to the future plans and direction of Hayden. My Campaign Slogan is: Promises Made – Promises Kept.	I am a 12-year Hayden resident, husband, father of five, and grandfather of nine. I bring 38 years of experience as a Realtor, service as a Trustee on the Kootenai Hospital Board, and a background in biblical and organizational leadership from Moody Bible Institute and Trinity Western University. As a long-time parliamentarian, I know that when “the rules rule,” fairness, transparency, and respect follow — and that’s exactly what Hayden deserves.